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DAN 400.01: Modern IV

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FALL 2007

Drama/Dance Dept.

DAN 400 & 429, Modern IV & Advanced Techniques of Modern Dance

3 Credits

M, W, F 9:10-11 a.m.

Rm. 005, PARTV Building

Prof. Amy Ragsdale

Office Hours: M, W 1-2:30 p.m.

Rm. 186, PARTV Building

Ext. 2832, amy.ragsdale@umontana.edu

(note: I do not check my email every day.)

GOALS:

- To continue to work on intermediate-advanced level dance vocabulary.
- To continue to work on fundamental technical skills: alignment, safe and effective use of the feet, integration of body halves, understanding of line, body part articulation, and ability to smoothly change levels and move on the floor.
- To continue to work on rehearsal skills such as: quickly picking up movement, changing fronts, reversing sides, birding, and accurately executing rhythm/counts/musicality, if given.
- To focus on your ability to express yourself effectively through movement by working on performance skills, such as: your ability to crystallize movement qualities, your strength of spatial and focal intention, your understanding of movement initiations, your ability to move consciously as part of a group, your facial expression, your ability to respond to the music, and your ability to bring your humanity to the movement (whether or not you generate it).
- To increase your appreciation for contemporary dance as an audience member by exploring the art of contemporary dance through in-class exercises in choreography and improvisation and through viewing and discussing several dance concerts.
- To help you analyze and articulate in written form your opinions about choreography you've seen.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

Class will consist of three parts: technique, improvisation and composition exercises. The technique exercises will work on contemporary dance technique and vocabulary as well as increase strength, flexibility and general coordination. The exercises in improvisation offer a chance to explore technical concepts or types of vocabulary at your own pace, to work on being present with others and to explore your personal movement inclinations and voice. The composition exercises help to increase your understanding of and appreciation for the art of choreography.

REQUIREMENTS:

Three Critiques: You are required to attend three dance concerts and turn in three written critiques evaluating what you saw. See the “Dance Technique Class” sheet for concert dates and times.

One critique should:

List general questions raised, for you, by the concert. List them in bullet form and below each, in bullet-list form, your succinct thoughts about those questions.

One critique should:

Address performance. Select two dancers to discuss. Be specific about what it was about their performances that made them stand out to you (eg. eye focus, movement quality, musicality, clarity, ability to embody a character/emotion,...).

One critique should:

Address choreography. You can look at the “Dance Technique Class” sheet for general guidelines, BUT this one also needs to be organized around a theme – a question – of your choice (eg. How were props used throughout the concert? How did some choreographers manage to create humor? How did some choreographers manipulate, or not, the audience’s focus? How was the content of pieces with more literal subject matter conveyed more, or less, effectively? Etc.)

You may decide which critique to write about which concert. Critiques should be typed and double-spaced. There is no specific page length. They should be thorough but succinct. I do not accept emailed papers. They will be due approximately a week after the last performance of the concert run. This will be specified in class. (Ask me if I forget to tell you!)

A Journal

Please buy a small notebook to dedicate to this class. At the end of each class I will give you a few minutes to write down: what you worked on in that class, questions raised, comments/corrections/images/exercises/experiences you’d like to remember. I will collect this twice -- at the middle and end of the semester.

Attendance:

You are allowed to miss only two classes, for whatever reason. After this you may make up a total of two classes by:

- A. participating in another Modern class and having the professor sign a note that you did
- B. observing any other dance class offered by the department and writing a one-page observation of how that class was similar to and different from this one
- C. viewing an assigned video and writing a one page response to it

Absences beyond this will lower your grade by a point for each class missed.

EXPECTATIONS:

You will approach this class like a professional: with attentiveness, with good energy and spirit, with a willingness to try the material and approaches offered, with an effort to listen to all corrections given, not just those specifically directed to you. By doing these things consistently you will take active responsibility for your learning.

GRADING:

Your grade will be based on your ability to execute given vocabulary, to engagingly embody movement phrases – raising them to a performance level, to demonstrate rehearsal skills (see Goals), to take corrections given in class, to articulate your thoughts about and thoughtfully analyze concerts you've seen in written critiques, and my evaluation of your general attitude, effort and improvement over the course of the semester.... and then, of course, the ramifications of attendance will be added after an initial grade is calculated.

The requirements for students taking the class Credit/No Credit are the same as for those taking the class for a traditional grade. Auditors will not be subject to the attendance requirements or required to attend concerts or write critiques.

DATES OF NOTE:

No class on: Sept. 3, Nov. 12, 21 & 23

Master classes by Locust Dance Theater: Sept. 24, 28

DEPT. OF DRAMA/DANCE HANDBOOK: All Drama/Dance students must have an in-depth knowledge of the practices and procedures outlined in the **Department of Drama/Dance Handbook**. The Handbook is available online at <http://www.sfa.umt.edu/drama/index.html>.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AND THE STUDENT CONDUCT CODE: All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at www.umt.edu/SA/VP/SA/Index.cfm/page/1321.